

NOXIOUS WEED AND INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES ASSISTANCE FUND**GRANT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- Provide funds to weed management programs in Nebraska.
- Promote collaborative efforts to survey and manage noxious and invasive weeds.
- Support innovative integrated approaches to weed management.
- Build public awareness of the adverse impacts of noxious weeds and invasive plants and need for proactive control.

GRANT CRITERIA AND RATING SCALE

Rating Criteria	Criteria Weighting and Rating Scale Value					
	Low		Average		High	
Sound planning and design	0	5	10	15	20	25
Direct measurable environmental benefits	0	5	10	15	20	25
Wide variety of public/private partners	0	5	10	15	20	25
County Weed Control Authority leadership	0	5	10	15	20	25
Innovative and unique	0	4	8	12	16	20
Duration of benefits	0	4	8	12	16	20
Prevents resource contamination and degradation	0	4	8	12	16	20
Integrates multiple weed management tools	0	4	8	12	16	20
Cost effective	0	3	6	9	12	15
Matching resources (in excess of 50%)	0	3	6	9	12	15
Quantify public benefit	0	3	6	9	12	15
Economic impact	0	3	6	9	12	15
Management practices developed extend beyond grant term	0	3	6	9	12	15

GRANT APPLICATION TIMELINE

- July 2005 – Call for proposals disseminated.
- October 1, 2005 – Deadline for submission of proposals to Nebraska Department of Agriculture.
- January 15, 2006 – Nebraska Department of Agriculture awards grants for approved proposals.

GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

I. General Instructions

You will need to submit one original and one copy of the completed application. Each original and copy of the complete application has a cover sheet and four sections created by tabbed dividers. The dividers are to be labeled: Narrative, Budget, Timeline, and Partners.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit materials in 8½" x 11" format. Please do not submit applications in binders or with report covers. Use rubber bands and/or spring-loaded clips to keep the copies of your applications together.

Because they are so important, we require that you use our cover sheet and budget forms. You may use photocopies of the forms. You may fill them in by hand. We really want all the information requested on the cover sheet. We really want the budget information requested in the format as described, filed in the appropriate section. If we can't find the information, we may find that we can't fund the project.

Label every page of your application with the sponsor name and project name at the top. Be sure that any attachments are clearly labeled to indicate content.

Letters of endorsement are encouraged. Letters confirming participation of all partners are required. We must confirm partners, in writing, before a grant is awarded. See instructions for the "Partners" section.

Applicants are advised that all information submitted in an application becomes a matter of public record. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) reserves the right to request additional information, as it deems appropriate. You will be given reasonable time to respond. Failure to provide requested information may cause your application to be declared ineligible.

The provision of false or misleading information may disqualify your application. The discovery of false or misleading information will result in a grant being revoked, and repayment of any funds issued. If your application is approved for funding, information provided in the application is a binding attachment to your grant contract.

II. Application Components

You will need the three forms provided in this packet and four tabbed dividers to create an application. The dividers should be labeled: Narrative, Budget, Timeline, and Partners. Remember that you will need to submit one original and one copy of everything for a complete application.

- A. The Cover Sheet.** A form called the "Application Cover Sheet" is included in this packet. Please complete the form and file it as the first page of your application. Line by line instructions follow.

1. Project Sponsor. The "Sponsor" is the person(s) or organization(s) who will carry out the project. When more than one person or organization is sponsoring a project, please list the lead entity first.
 - ***What is the difference between a project sponsor and a project partner?***

A sponsor is accountable for the successful execution of a project. A partner contributes resources, but is not necessarily responsible for the implementation of the project.
2. Project Name. Please keep the project name to one line. If you are submitting applications for more than one project, it is useful to create titles that are clearly distinct.
- 3-4. Project Location. List the county or counties where the project will be implemented. Some projects may not have a physical location and may answer these items "N/A."
5. Total Amount Requested. Fill in the total amount of grant funds requested from NDA under this application. Do not list the total cost of the project here.
6. Years of Funding. Indicate how many years of funding and/or the time needed to complete the project you are requesting. NDA can fund a project for a maximum of three years per application award. A funding year usually ends on June 30 of the following year. Subsequent funding years begin on July 1.
- 7-12. Contact Information. Provide information here for the individual who is best informed about this application, can answer questions that may arise and provide additional information which NDA may request during the review period. Please include information so that we may reach this individual directly.
13. Sponsor category. Circle the appropriate option. If you select "other," please provide a description.
14. Federal funding. Indicate whether federal funding is being received for this project.
15. State of Nebraska funding. Indicate whether state of Nebraska funding is being received for this project.
16. Other sources of funding. Indicate whether other funding is being received for this project.
17. Summary. It is important that your overview be brief; yet give a clear description of the project. It should summarize the key activities you wish to undertake, and outcomes you hope to achieve. *It must be 300 words or less*. This summary will be used to describe your project in NDA publications.
18. Signature. An authorized agent of the sponsor must sign the certification of the original copy of the cover sheet. Also print or type this name and title so that it is legible.

B. The Narrative Section. Create the first tabbed divider labeled "NARRATIVE." Behind this divider, in two pages or less, provide a discussion of your project. Be sure to cover the following points:

- Describe in detail the design of the project, how it will be implemented, and what objectives will be achieved. Emphasize especially the objectives, benefits and outcomes. Tell who will benefit from this project and how. Describe any economic, social and/or public health impacts this project will have.
- Highlight innovative features and preventive components of the project. What measures have been or will be taken to maximize cost-effectiveness? Who is contributing to this project: in what ways? Describe how you will measure the outcomes and evaluate your success.
- If the project will require continuing maintenance and/or administration, discuss how these costs will be funded and how this responsibility will be assured.

C. The Budget and Financial Section. Create the second tabbed divider, and label it "BUDGET." In this section, file in order the Application Budget Worksheet(s), the Application Budget Justification and financial information of the sponsor(s).

Please use the forms provided to complete this section. You may photocopy the forms as needed.

C-1. Instructions for the Application Budget Worksheet. All applications must include a summary Budget Worksheet. Complete one Worksheet for the total project you are proposing. Projects applying for more than one year of funding must file a summary Worksheet and a Worksheet for each year of funding. File the summary Worksheet first, then annual Worksheets in order. Fill in the Sponsor Information as requested and circle "Summary," "One," "Two," or "Three" in the box at the top of the page to indicate which budget year the page is for.

Source of Funds. In Row 1 of the table, name the contributing partners of the project. Cell 1-B is completed, as Column B is reserved for the grant funds you are requesting from NDA. Name the other sources of funds or contributing partners in Cells 1-C, 1-D and 1-E as needed.

- ***What if a project has more than three contributing partners?***

Sometimes, a number of small donors can be combined in one column. For example, the column heading might be, "Community Donors." An explanation can be provided in the next part of the budget section.

It is also possible to make a multiple-page table. Number the pages. Write "continued" in cell 18-F of the first page(s) and provide totals only in Column F of the last page.

Budget Categories. In Column A, beginning in Row 3, list the budget categories.

- ***How specific should these categories be?***

This is a matter of judgment. Too many categories will make your application hard to understand and your grant hard to administer if it is funded. Too few categories may not provide enough information to judge the quality of your project. Remember, help is available if you have questions.

Dollar amounts. Complete the table by inserting dollar amounts in the correct row and column. In Column B, insert the dollar amount requested in grant funds for each

component in the appropriate row. In Columns C, D and E, show matching contributions for each category from the other sources of funds for the project.

In-kind (non-cash) contributions. Place an asterisk (*) in each cell where contributions are in-kind (for example, donated labor).

Totals. Complete Column F by totaling each row. Complete the Row 18 by totaling each column. Column F and the Row 18 should total the same amount in Cell 18-F.

▪ ***When does a funding year begin?***

If a project is recommended for funding, the grantee can begin spending upon receipt of the letter of notification of the recommendation from NDA. Funds can be released when NDA receives a signed grant contract with all required paperwork. A funding year usually ends on June 30. Subsequent years begin on July 1.

C-2. Instructions for the Application Budget Justification. This section validates the dollar amounts shown in the Application Budget Worksheet. It helps to establish the cost-effectiveness of a project, matching funds and public-private partnerships. Complete the project sponsor information as requested. Answer questions 1-3 as appropriate.

To complete the chart in item 4, copy the budget categories from Column A of the Application Budget Worksheet. Then, for each category, describe the basis used to estimate the dollar amounts given in the Application Budget Worksheet. A basis could be a bid, estimate or purchase agreement. Sometimes, a calculation is an appropriate basis. For example, the calculation "hourly wage times number of hours needed" provides the basis for a labor cost. If you have documents to verify the information you should mark "Y" in the column for attachments. You also need to label the document so that we know which budget item it goes with and list the attachment name in the last column of the chart.

▪ ***What are the bidding requirements for grant-funded purchases?***

Individuals and private organizations will need to obtain at least two written bids for any material or service in excess of \$1000. The estimates do not need to be obtained by the time the application is submitted. All bids are to be kept on file and made available to NDA upon request.

▪ ***We are asking for NDA funding to purchase equipment. How specific does our description need to be?***

Equipment purchases are discouraged but will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Provide as much specific information about the equipment as possible at the time of the application. Due to the processing time required for an application, it is not always possible to specify a model with costs. Specific information about grant-funded equipment will be required before funds will be issued.

▪ ***Are there additional requirements if a grant is made to buy equipment?***

All equipment must be used for the purpose described in the grant application for the useful life of the equipment. Usually, the depreciation schedule used for tax purposes is

used to define the useful life. Grant-funded equipment may not be sold, transferred, traded or mortgaged without prior permission from NDA. The grantee is also responsible for insuring grant-funded equipment valued at \$1000 or more.

- D. Instructions for the Timeline Section.** Create the third tabbed divider, and label it "TIMELINE." In this section, list the scheduled month and year to begin and end each component of the project. Every timeline should include "NDA Grant Awarded" and "NDA Grant Ends" as component items.
- E. Instructions for the Partners Section.** Create the fourth tabbed divider, and label it "PARTNERS." Remember, NDA encourages public-private partnerships; having both government and private sponsors will strengthen your application.

A partner is any individual or organization that will contribute funds, services or materials to the project. Contractors are not partners. Donors of services or materials are partners.

Provide a list of the partners and their contributions as the first page of this section. Include a letter of confirmation of participation from each partner after this page. These letters should specify the contribution to be made and confirm the partner's commitment to the project. A legally accountable representative of an organization must sign the letters. Letters of support or endorsement from others who are not partners are not appropriate in this section.

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